

ARTICLE 4: Principals as Instructional Leaders

But can they do it all? And at what cost?

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Principals play many roles including facilities manager, social worker, mental health therapist and family advocate, however one important role for administrators is that of an instructional leader. Teachers respect leaders who know how to get involved and play a clear role in designing and implement curriculum that is rich. There is a level of respect that is created when superintendents teach principals and principals teacher teachers. The impact of working as a principal who is an instructional leader is great since they are seen as the people who help to build knowledge and collaboration among their staff. One way principals help teachers think through curriculum is by having them participate in conversation that focuses on question designed to deepen their pedagogy. Learning curriculum alongside staff emphasizes the leadership commitment to life long learning. 1

If the job of the principal is to ensure that teachers work collaboratively and develop pedagogical knowledge, then it is obvious that the role of the superintendent must also shift. Superintendents have the job of ensuring that principals are provided with the support to take on the role of leadership. In past years many administrative jobs focused on being building problem solvers and facility managers. In recent years principals have shifted towards being an ongoing learner who can provide support to teachers who are having difficulty with implementing curriculum. In the article Finkel points out that often in

the Principalship one of the biggest challenges is not letting the time you want to commit to instruction be absorbed by the numerous other responsibilities that come up.

One principal talks about his role as an instructional leader and what it means to the work he does. He speaks about his role which is to remain aware of what is happening in classrooms including the methodologies and curriculum implemented. Specifically know this allow school leaders to identify good teaching and strong practices that impact student learning. Overall the theme is that principal involvement in instructional leadership has a positive impact on schools. Principals who are seen as instructional leaders have the most success.